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Silence

H. M. James

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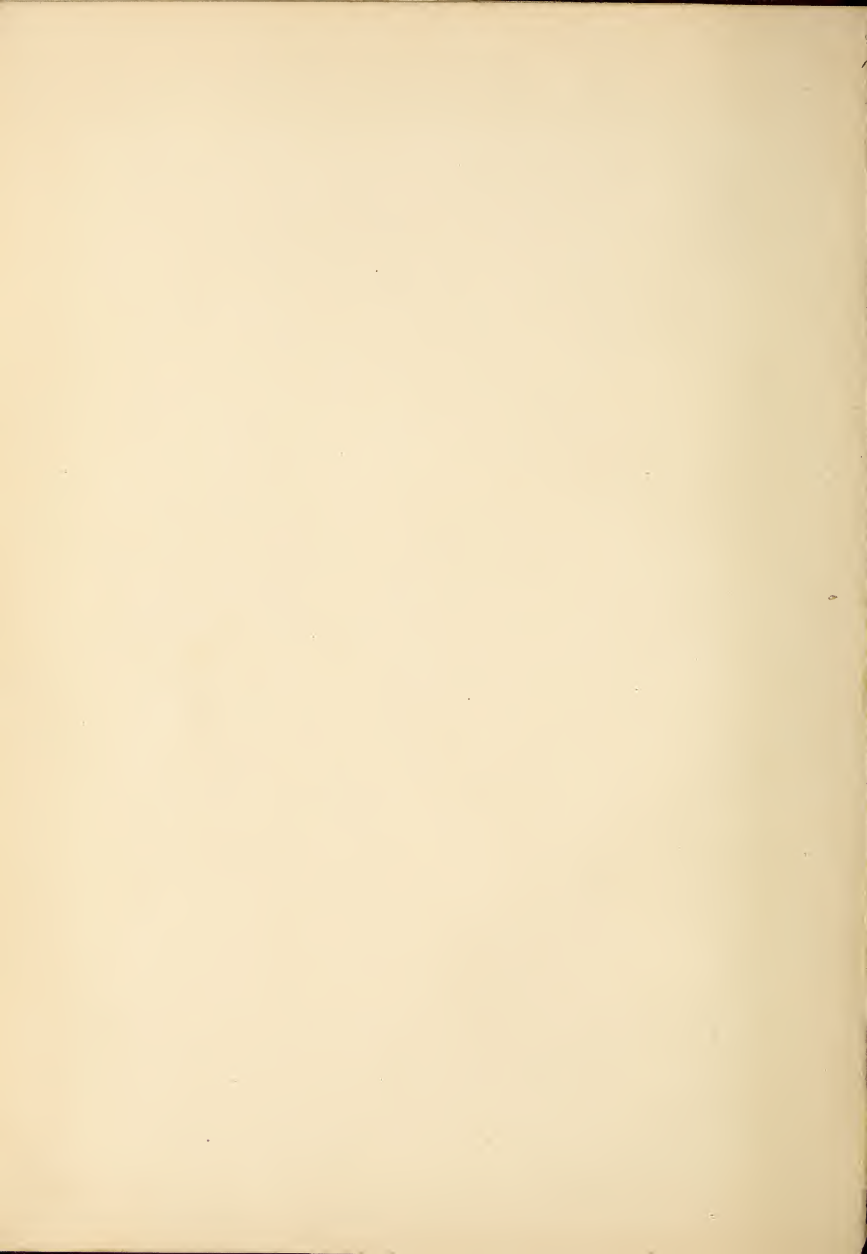
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Mr. and Mrs. James.

With loving Christmas greetings from
Helen Nichols.

1884.



PS1769
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1877

SILENCE.

BY

S. MILLER HAGEMAN,

PRINCETON, N. J.

TENTH EDITION.

BROOKLYN, L. I:

PUBLISHED BY D. S. HOLMES,

89 FOURTH ST.

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TO
THE MEMORY
OF
MY MOTHER.



WHAT THE GREAT POETS AND AUTHORS OF THE WORLD
SAY OF "SILENCE."

"Full of fine imagination."

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

"Silence is a beautiful poem. It has many passages noteworthy for thought and expression, which have stamped themselves on my memory at first reading."

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

"The poem on Silence has impressed me by its fertility of fancy and affluence of illustration. Its author has brought to it a fine poetic enthusiasm which is felt in every stanza, and which in other hands would have yielded but meager results."

W. CULLEN BRYANT.

"Silence has afforded me great pleasure in reading it."

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

"I have read the poem more than once, with interest and admiration. I congratulate the author on the beauty of his work."

JEAN INGELOW.

"I have read Silence with very great pleasure, and am much struck by the beauty of many of them."

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL.

"Your book of poems demands my most distinguished consideration."

ALFONZO XII, KING OF SPAIN.

"I have had great pleasure in reading it."

DOM PEDRO.

"Her Majesty the Queen has been graciously pleased to accept the poem, entitled Silence, and commands that her thanks be sent to the author."

QUEEN VICTORIA, (through her Secretary.)

"Silence is a poem of great poetical beauty."

JAMES MCCOSH.
Pres. of Princeton College.

Letters from Charles Spurgeon, Disraeli, Lord Derby, Gladstone, and almost all the noted foreign authors, as well as American, have been received, speaking most highly of this beautiful poem, besides the most flattering reviews from all the American and foreign papers.

PROËM.

THE FORTY-SIXTH PSALM. A TRUE TRANSLATION.

GOD is our refuge and strength ;
Found thoroughly a help in troubles.
Therefore will not we fear though the
 earth should change,
And the mountains rock like the midst of
 the seas.
Let its floods moan and boil ;
Let the mountains toss as its crest.
It shall be a river the streams whereof
 shall glad the city of God :

It shall be the holiest of the dwellings of
the Most High.

God is in the midst of her. She shall not
be rocked in waves.

God shall help her at the turning of the
morning.

The nations moan. The kingdoms rock.

He utters his voice. The earth melts.

Be still; and know that I am God!

SILENCE.



1.

SLOWLY climb the moon-touched mountains up their stairway to the sky,
Slowly each white cloud ascending, seems
a soul, that passed on high:
Summit billowing after summit higher and
still higher grow,
Till they break in awful Silence on a glittering strand of snow.

II

Silent cataract of summits, stiffened on
thy frozen verge,

Leaping in tumultuous silence to thy
adamantine surge :

Motionless, yet grandly moving, seems thy
avalanche of stone.

Silence! Be thou everlasting, on thy soli-
tary throne.

III.

At thy base, the swirling river chatters
idly to the clod,

At thy brow, thy head is lifted through
the cloud to talk with God:

Prophet-like, with mantle folded round thy
dread and spectral form,

Far below thee screams the eagle, far be-
low thee raves the storm.

IV.

Often in my early fancy had I roved in
search of rest,
As the southern bird at springtime, seeks
afar its northern nest;
Often in my elder yearning had I dreamed
within me deep,
Of that high repose that ever lies upon
the soul like sleep.

V.

Of a sweet and tender silence, that should
soothe each aching sound,
As the snow within the church-yard
marbles every aching mound:
Where the soul should find its footing in
the spiritual rock,
Like a lord within a castle, built above
the billow's shock.

VI.

Not in vain yon towering mountains, that
 I marked your silver spires;
Not in vain yon reddening heavens, fretted
 with your cresset-fires:
Torch of Nature, thou hast led me from
 thy summit far and free,
To a height within my spirit that is
 grander far than thee.

VII.

Far above earth's transient echoes, far
above earth's broken sound,
Domes the overarching distance of the
blue receding round:
Softly as the world grows louder, softly
o'er the rising din,
Hear the great white Silence open like a
lily on the lin.

VIII.

Greatness lies insphered in silence, littleness
to sound is stirred,
All the grandest things in Nature never
have been seen or heard :
Proving down by printless logic all the
science of the school,
Silence is the law of being, Sound, the
breaking of the rule.

IX.

Wind was flourishing its trumpets, but
th' embattled air is still,
Streams were roaring down the gorges,
they have thridded to a rill;
Thunder rumbled on the heaven, but its
chariots have sped,
Man was talking to his fellow, but the
man grew dumb—and dead.

X.

Every sound shall end in silence, but the
 silence never dies,
From the roar of swarming cities, from
 the vague of peopled skies;
From the wind and from the forest, from
 the cliff and from the sea,
Like a child unto its mother, all thy
 sounds come back to thee.

XI.

So, like her who bade us open eyes she
yet may fix in death,

Thou hast brought us into being, thou
shalt take away our breath;

Thou art Alpha and Omega, for a world
is in thy womb,

Thou art Alpha and Omega, for a world
is in thy tomb.

XII.

Far into the Past I wandered, paused
within its mellow clime,
Where the Lethean years were crossing
at the Jabbok-ford of Time;
Felt the boundaries of being sink around
me into space,
Listened, but could hear no echo, looked,
but saw nor form nor face.

XIII.

Shadows of the ashen ages, ere this wreck-
ing ark of earth

Sailed upon the soundless ether, round the
great sun's beaconing hearth;

When the circumfluent Silence washed the
cold sphere with its wave,

When man lived within his Maker, as
Christ lived within the grave.

XIV.

Noiselessly, the round Creation slowly rose
into its place,

Like the moon at night, ascending on the
star-sloped stairs of space:

To its walls there came no workman, to
its towers no touch of hand,

Without sound, like some great palm-tree.
spreading over sea and land.

XV.

Strata overleaping strata from the center
to the crust,
Rose, Alp-high, in molten silence, as the
dead rise from the dust ;
Rounding over all its angles softly as
creation's call,
Poising on its noiseless nothing, spins
this intercipient ball.

XVI.

Noiselessly, the bright procession of the
Seasons rounds in sight,
Thronging up the deep perspective through
the minster-aisles of night ;
Noiselessly, the light's red chrism over-
flows the brim of space,
Like the wine, whose blushing colors pur-
ple in the chaliced vase.

XVII.

As the fingers of the sunbeams lift the
drapery of night,
Soundlessly its forms are shaping 'neath
the touches of the light;
And, with eloquence unuttered, speak they
to the listening heart,
As the traveler softly enters Nature's
gallery of Art.

XVIII.

Rolls the glimmering wheel of motion
ever without clog or jar,

In the orb, and in the ocean, in the earth's
incrusted star ;

In the law of heat, whose lever turns the
globe, without a sound ;

In the law of gravitation, holding motion
to its bound.

XIX.

Earth is but the frozen echo of the silent
voice of God,
Like a dewdrop in a crystal throbbing
in the senseless clod:
Silence is the heart of all things, sound,
the fluttering of its pulse,
Which the fever and the spasm of the
Universe convulse.

XX.

Silence is the incarnation of an infinite
idea,

Kept in nature by a process that we
neither see nor hear;

For the thought of God eternal cannot
wholly be expressed,

But a fading arc of nature rolls in light
above the rest.

XXI.

Waveless seas are softly brewing in their
continents of stone,
On whose offing tossing shadows of white
sails shall yet be thrown;
Like the peace that passeth knowledge
shines the rainbow in the rock,
Perfect shapes are proudly waiting in the
unsuspected block.

XXII.

Solemn spell of all the ages, finger on the
lip of God,

Like a shout of nations rising back to him
from sea and sod ;

The "I Am" of the Creator well opposed
in restful life,

To the "I Become" of creature, shuffling
in its fitful strife.

XXIII.

Every sound that breaks the silence only
 makes it more profound,
Like a crash of deafening thunder in the
 sweet blue stillness drowned;
Let thy soul walk softly in thee, as a
 saint in heaven unshod,
For to be alone with Silence is to be
 alone with God.

XXIV.

Swells a sound upon the prairie, roadly
 heaving with the breeze,
'Tis the roaring of the silence, like the
 roaring of the seas;
Breaking out on that vast ocean in a
 seething foam of flowers,
Splashing up its dripping spray of sunlight
 through the dial-hours.

XXV.

Burn, ye stars like altar-candles, round the
golden throne of God ;
Bloom, ye flowers like fragrant footprints,
where his after-thoughts have trod ;
Steal, oh river like a tear-drop over
Nature's furrowed cheek,
For there is no speech—no language,
where your silence does not speak.

XXVI.

What is history? Half-blown Silence lift-
ing leaf by leaf its bud,
Be it read by book or battle, be it
traced by drops of blood;
Providence, the perfect poem of a God
whose name is Love,
Set on earth to seeming discord, set to
music far above.

XXVII.

That which makes the things that are
not like unto the things that are,
That which makes the past seem present,
bringing near the dim—the far;
Wisps a waif of mellow music from a
long forgotten harp,
Weaves a new and gorgeous fashion from
a faded woof and warp.

XXVIII.

Overlooks a distant battle in the evening
of the day,
Calls the roll of earth's dead cities, hears
them start up from the clay;
Strikes a sense of living beauty on the
scenes that are no more,
Marks the ocean of oblivion cast its
shells upon the shore.

XXIX.

Every angel in his chainless freedom
looks upon a slave,
Every star that shines in heaven still must
shine upon a grave ;
On the drift my feet are sliding, and my
earthly eyes are dust,
Up to God a voice I lift, in some such
words as these—I trust.

XXX.

Voice of Silence, thou art speaking from
the Palace of the past,
On whose old memoric windows faces full
of life are cast ;
Where the Kings of thought, enthroned,
like a star on midnight peak,
Rule the world with silent spirits, who,
though being dead—yet speak.

XXXI.

Voice of Silence, thou art speaking in the
 apanage of art,
In the mute, electric echoes that through
 air and ocean dart;
In the sunlight, falling on us like God's
 shadow passing by,
At whose touch the dead are looking on
 us with a life-like eye.

XXXII.

Voice of Silence, thou art speaking from
the stone-sealed lips of sleep,
That, without a sound or motion, in its
spell all sound doth keep;
In whose swaddling clothes enfolden lie, too
pure for waking sins,
Cradled in a mortal creature, Life and
Death, like sleeping twins.

XXXIII.

Voice of Silence, thou art speaking in the
ministry of man,

On the Nebo of remora, prophet to an
endless plan ;

And, by silent testimony, and, by influence
unheard,

Doth he more for God or devil, than he
doth by war or word.

XXXIV.

Voice of Silence, thou art speaking on the
Patmos-isle of earth,
Where God's reachless revelations rise
unuttered from their birth;
Brightly, like a burning city, flames the
sunset in the sky,
Through whose great cathedral-window
shines the City built on high.

XXXV.

Silence on the pallid face-cloth, Silence
on the snowy grave,
Silence on the sleeping city, Silence far
below the wave :
Silence, as of music slumbering on her harp
within the deep,
Sound is but the dream of Silence, Silence
talking in its sleep.

XXXVI.

Sound is but the rippling shadow of the
silence, deep and grand,
Silent is the force that hideth in the
sound of wheel and hand;
Silent is the power that riots in the tem-
pest's wanton might;
Just behind the floating storm-cloud lies
the calm eternal light.

XXXVII.

Faintly on the solid silence comes the
carven bust of Thought,
Shadow of all earthly sculpture by an
artist ever wrought;
Without sound, and without touching, felt
to form it stands outlined,
Solid fact, and fine-grained finish, on the
marble of the mind.

XXXVIII.

Thus it was that as I wandered, often, on
the yellow beach,

Day to day was uttering knowledge, night
to night was showing speech :

Till the stillness grew oppressive, so that
when I left the spot,

On the sounding shore the ocean thundered ; but I heard it not.

XXXIX.

In the spell of summer evenings, 'neath
the light of mellow moons,

Glide the gondoliers of Venice dimly down
the blue lagoons:

O, the songs that melt along those purl-
ing streets beyond the sea!

O, the sweet Italian twilights! O, the
land of Italy!

XL.

Once, my heated soul was looking from
the window of its hope,
And before it lay life's landscape with
the sun upon the slope:
Far I leaned into the Future, from the
Old into the New,
But my breath hath blurred the glass, and
hid the vision from my view.

XLI.

Once, my pure white thoughts lay floating
on my heart, as floats the flake
Of the christened water-lily starred upon
the crystal lake:
But the ice of tears has hardened on that
crimson-cruised stream,
On its lilies, crushed and shattered, dead
within a frozen dream.

XLII.

And to-night, when stars are shivering
coldly to the darkened slope,
Still a soul is sadly looking from the
window of its hope ;
Longing in its gentle grief to fly away
and be at rest,
Like the nightingale complaining to the
red thorn at its breast.

XLIII.

Hear a broken voice within thee struggling
with the perfect will,
Hush it in the strong submission of thy
spirit, and be still :
Stillness, in which thou shalt hear the fall-
ing of a lifted rod,
Stillness, in which thou shalt hear the full-
orbed whisper of a God.

XLIV.

Then it was my heart, affrighted, fled within
me, like a roe

When it hears the arrow hurtle from the
Indian hunter's bow ;

Till I stood beyond the sunset, heard the
sounds of trouble cease,

Felt the stars, God's silent whispers, throb
through all the purple peace.

XLV.

Somewhere on this moving planet, in the
mist of years to be,
In the silence, in the shadow, waits a
loving heart for thee;
Somewhere in the beckoning heavens,
where they know as they are known,
Are the empty arms above thee that shall
clasp thee for their own.

XLVI.

Somewhere in the far-off silence, I shall
 feel a vanished hand,
Somewhere I shall know a voice that now
 I cannot understand ;
Somewhere ! Where art thou, oh spectre
 of illimitable Space ?
Silent scene without a shadow, silent
 sphere without a place.

XLVII.

Comes there back no sound beyond us
where the trackless sunbeam calls?

Comes there back no wraith of music,
melting through the crystal walls?

Comes there back no bird, to lisp us of
the great forevermore,

With a leaf of Life, unwithered, plucked
upon the farther shore?

XLVIII.

Why are they so strangely silent, are they
more or are they less?

Are their spirits lost forever in the vault
of nothingness?

Why yon gates of pearl so fastened?
why yon stirless dead so dumb?

What has o'er those silent travelers in
the march of Ages come?

XLIX.

Break, O, break this bitter silence! speak
unto me once again!

Tell me, shall I e'er behold thee? tell
me, do I wait in vain?

O, my mother! O, my mother! Ship
beneaped on foreign shore,

Answerless the air around me, answerless
forevermore.

L.

Tell me, O yon wind, that plashes where
the wild bird hath not flown,
On what strand beyond the sunset shall
the Soul's white sail be blown?
Brightly on the purple upland stream
the banners of the sun,
But the light of Nature fadeth, and
another day is done.

LI.

I remember, as the shadows darken coldly
to the past,
One, whose beauty could but linger, one,
whose beauty could not last ;
All the large orb of her spirit, glowing
in its central sky,
Slowly faded into sunset, through the
twilight of her eye.

LII.

Fashioned like a form in marble shone
the lily of her face,
Like a chapter from the Bible, it was
read in every place;
Fixed in deep and serious sweetness,
passionate with self-control,
So she swept, a sweet enchantress, through
the portal of my soul.

LIII.

Every word she spake was fitted like a
gesture to her hand,

Every look at her was like a visit to a
foreign land ;

She was fair, and still I count her as the
mould of all her race ;

She was fair, and still I hold it least,
I looked her in the face.

LIV.

Swiftly then I clasped her spirit closely
in my larger thought,
She to all my life was likened she to ail
my love was wrought;
Soon for me that sweet face vanished, soon
I saw that form depart,
But her love becomes an angel in the
heaven of my heart.

LV.

Oft there rises one before me with a calm
and constant eye,
And she lifts her warning finger, points
my darkened path on high;
O, invisible atonement! stretching o'er
the gulfs of space,
Spirit witnessing to Spirit, what to this
were voice—were face!

LVI.

Now, by that unchanging river and by
that untelling sun,
Where we used to walk together often
when the day was done,
Still the woodbine and the willow love in
sisterhood to grow,
But we parted, where their shadows wed
our spirits long ago.

LVII.

Waft her white soul up to heaven for a
truce to sin and time,

Waft her, winds, beyond the mountain,
where the white cloud loves to climb ;

Sweeps the soul with wing unbroken, bolted
past, and massive wall,

Not until the door was shut, that Christ
stood in the banquet-hall.

LVIII.

I shall slumber, but it recks not where my
lonely grave be made,
Whether you and I together in a kindred
ground are laid :
I shall slumber, but it recks not who
shall touch me in the gloom,
Twins, that sleep within the cradle, are not
twins within the tomb.

LIX.

Soon this heart shall stop its beating, but
its reddened dust shall rise;
I shall live in other faces, I shall look in
other eyes :
Toss the winecup to the wassail, riot in
the winds that rave,
There is rest within the cradle, there is
none within the grave.

LX.

Wings are growing on the restless eagle
of the migrant soul,

Soon its strong, imprisoned pinions shall
bound up to God—its goal :

Without wing-beat, without motion, pois-
ing in the clear "I Am,"

Poising in the shadowy eyry of God's
high colossal cann.

LXI.

Thus it happened, as I wandered often on
the whitened cliff,
While the moon hung o'er the mountain,
moored there like a crescent-skiff,
That my memory shone within me o'er
the Ocean of the years,
And I saw through all my lifetime refluent
waves of smiles and tears.

LXII.

Like a breath upon a bugle, when its silver
echo thrills

All among the answering mountains, all
about the whispering hills;

Like a bird within a forest, when it tweaks
a little song,

Till the whole deep wood is haunted with
the music of a throng.

LXIII.

All things yet shall work together, and
so working orb in one,

As the sun draws back its sunbeams, when
the dial-day is done:

All things yet shall gather roundly, and
unite, and shape, and climb,

Into Truth's great golden unit, in the ripe
result of time.

LXIV.

Wisdom ripens unto silence as she grows
more truly wise,

And she wears a mellow sadness, in her
heart, and in her eyes:

Wisdom ripens unto silence, and the lesson
she doth teach,

Is that life is more than language, and that
thought is more than speech.

LXV.

What to me the proud traditions of a
philosophic age,
If they dwarf the growth of progress sneer-
ing at a recent page?
What to me the reverent teachings that I
heard of in my youth,
If they close the last inquiry of my spirit,
“What is Truth?”

LXVI.

What is Truth? Thy jewelled finger points
like light, with swerveless trend,
From the Orient of knowledge to the path
that hath no end :

What is Truth? Religion ponders, science
bends her listening ears ;
Through the fallow of the Future, break the
seeds of silent years.

LXVII.

I was brought up at the altar of a mother's
bended knee,

I was sprinkled with the baptism of her
tears that fell on me;

I was born a sleeping orphan in a living
mother's arms,

Never life wove faster colors, never love
wove closer charms.

LXVIII.

Some one told Christ that his father and
his mother stood outside,
Turned he him to those that quickly brought
the message and replied;
Say to them, Who is my mother? And
upon his way he trod.
Not of blood or bone begotten, I was born
the child of God.

LXIX.

Who am I that I should truckle, puppet
to a low intent?

On God's errand I enlisted, by God's spirit

I was sent:

Unseen hands of ordination upon all my
life were laid,

What to this is man's commission? In
God's image men are made.

LXX.

Faith is but an idle canvas, flapping on
an idle mast,

If it be not found within thee as the work
of life at last:

Dotaged faith is but a fancy, he who waits
that dream is lost,

And his creed is but a millstone, and his
God is but a ghost.

LXXI.

Very like the soul is sleeping soundly
underneath the sod,

Very like the soul is walking softly over-
head with God ;

Likelihood alone is certain. Who shall
speak while God is dumb ?

Credent doubt is but the shadow of the
larger faith to come.

LXXII.

Go to Silence. Win her secret, she shall
teach thee how to speak
Shape to which all else is shadow grows
within thee clear, and bleak;
Go to Silence. She shall teach thee; ripe
fruit hangs within thy reach,
He alone hath clearly spoken, who hath
learned this. Thought is Speech.

LXXIII.

O thou strong and sacred silence, self-
contained in self-control,

O thou palliating silence, Sabbath art
thou of the soul:

Lie like snow upon my virtues, lie like
dust upon my faults,

Silent when the world dethrones me, silent
when the world exalts.

LXXIV.

Tamper not with idle rumor, lest the truth
appear to lie,

Carve thy life to hilted silence, wrong
shall fall on it, and die:

Tamper not with accusation, harvest not
what thou hast heard,

Christ stood in the court of Pilate, but he
answered not a word.

LXXV.

Know thou this that there is nothing in
the sounding lists of strife,
That so fortifies thy manhood as the
argument of life:
· Listen not to old wives' fables," draw
thyself from such apart,
Keep the thought of life, like Mary, virgin
to a virgin's heart.

LXXVI.

Prattle is the children's portion, gossip is
the prate of fools,

Talk is but a blundering error, truth shall
work with sharper tools :

Shallow sentiments that bubble, bubble on
the froth of thought,

Clearer crystals of conception by the
undercurrent wrought.

LXXVII.

Louder than the blast of bugle, louder
than the beat of drum,
Sounds the clarion of conscience to a
spirit overcome:
Louder than the crashing boulder down
its precipice doth roll,
Slides the avalanche of sorrow, through
the winter of the soul.

LXXVIII.

I have seen an eagle standing in the full-
orbed sun at noon,

I have seen a bird drift darkly up across
the midnight moon ;

I have seen a spirit passing over in the
deepening eye,

Too far off to hear its music, like the bird
within the sky.

LXXIX.

What shall sorrow say to sorrow like to
tears that fall unsaid?

For as life is to the living, so is death unto
the dead:

Sympathy shall sit before thee seven days
mutely on the ground,

Sorrow is a voice too tender to be drowned
by ruder sound.

LXXX.

It is well for us to suffer, it is well for us
to wait,

Well to swing like little children all our life
on death's loose gate;

Well to feel a mortal sickness wean the soul
from earthly spell,

Well to hear when all is over that sweet
whisper, "All is well."

LXXXI.

God hath set all things in being sliding out
of sound and sight,

Dropping down to mighty death dust in the
marble Urn of night ;

Blessed sacrament of Silence, holy shadow-
sphere of rest,

On thy scroll forever fading like a smoulder-
ing palimpsest.

LXXXII.

Deepening in thy sad sweet stillness
 round the burning deeds of wrong,
Hushing back the clamoring judgments
 of a vast unreckoned throng;
Soothing o'er the cry of sorrow, drying up
 the blood of pain,
With thy finger on the lip of cares, that
 now no more complain.

LXXXIII.

Still across the Eden woodlands slide the
birds in summer flock,
Pawing horse, and tawny panther, cataract,
and thunder-shock:
Still the blow that Cain struck Abel falleth
through the quivering air,
On the head of every creature, echoing,
Death—Death—everywhere.

LXXXIV.

Buried cities, stranded navies, crashing

battles, ravening storms,

Echo in the thirsty ether, and with sounds

the still air swarms:

On its burial field of centuries quiet like

the night doth fall,

Silence! Keep thy vigilled bivouac, with

the sweet stars over all.

LXXXV.

Silence is the voice of Spirit, silence is the
voice of God,
Since he said ; "go, preach my gospel " he
hath never spoken word:
Many a power since then hath perished,
many a charm hath lost its spell,
But that ever silent Spirit still on earth is
ruling well.

LXXXVI.

“There was silence up in heaven for the
space of half an hour,”

And the angel held his harp-string standing
in the jasper door:

And the lights blew out in darkness,
strangely, sadly, one by one,

And the sun stood still on Gibeon, and
the moon on Ajalon.

LXXXVII.

“It is finished!” “Father, hear me!”

“Why hast Thou forsaken me?”

But around him Silence gathered, silently,
how silently:

“If it were not so I would have told you,”
sounds upon my ear,

Splendid silence, thou hast told me more
than souls in heaven may hear.

LXXXVIII.

Subtle secret without solving since the
years were in their youth,

Staring like the Sphinx forever from the
trackless sands of truth:

Bright Apocalypse of vision dark Apoc-
rypha of cloud.

Silence something more than stillness
thinking to itself aloud.

LXXXIX.

Still I wandered for the last time on the
 sliding beach, apart,
Solacing the widening lesion of an unre-
 turning heart :
Saw the creamy sail dip brightly far behind
 the silver wave,
Saw the moon drop down the heaven to
 its coral-coffined grave.

XC.

Dips the white sail of my spirit down the
trending sea of death,
Silent sea without a ripple, save the ripple
of a breath :
Moving out for pass or shipwreck, without
signal, gun, or light.
To the phantom-pilot rounding on the
misty Reef of night.

XCI.

Still my faith will take the hand of him
whose form I cannot trace,
As I take your hand in darkness though
I cannot see your face:
Sit down by the side of God in heaven
with rapture deep and wild,
As I sat down by my mother when I was
a little child.

XCII.

Softly like a meteor falling drops the tear
that Jesus wept,
On the human tear beneath it, in the heart
that Christ hath kept :
Creature in Creator meeting, crystallizing
into one,
As stalactite meets stalagmite, standing
pillared where they run.

XCIII.

Steals a rich and dreamy sombre on the
landscape, overworn,
Comes a crimson on the aster, comes a
purple on the thorn ;
Shadows, lost like orphan-children, scattered
lie on lake and lea,
Many a wan and weary spirit longs for
silence, and for thee.

XCIV.

On the doorstep of my dwelling leaves
are falling like a prayer,
Little tracts from heaven, left there by the
angel of the air:
Read the leaf and learn the lesson, silent
Voice to you and me,
Like the leaf I too shall wither, with the
leaf I soon shall be.

XCV.

Fall around me feathery silence, fall around
me as I faint,
Heaven's casement-curtains closing softly
round the dying saint :
Shades of faintness coming o'er me, as
Death's iron gates unroll,
With the famine in my face, but with the
harvest in my soul.

XCVI.

Turn me on my fevered pillow, for the
night is turning too,

I will bolster up my courage, I will see
what death can do :

Death whose spectre stalks so coldly, what
is death? (we do thee wrong)

But life stopping in its singing, to take
breath for endless song.

XCVII.

Do not weep. I will not leave you. I
will never, never change,
I will try, but if I cannot speak, you must
not think it strange ;
Don't you think God's everlasting arms
are put round you and me?
And I know somewhere between them,
that the Gate of heaven will be.

XCVIII.

At the center of Creation lies a spot of
ceaseless rest,

Where the silent spirit broodeth like a
dove upon its nest :

Round it runs the deep horizon in its golden
quiet curled,

Round it at the wheel of Motion spins the
fashion of the world.

XCIX.

Noiselessly thy gates swing open for their
bars are made of light,
Swinging on the raven darkness from the
outer-wall of night;
Crystal city of the Silent, built beyond
the sounds of sin,
Lift afar your swarming gateways let, the
silent myriads in.

C.

Ever after mortal effort, ever after mortal
pains,

Something to which light is shadow, some-
thing unexpressed remains:

Ever after human question, ever after
human quest,

Something farther than the farthest, some-
thing better than the Best.

CI.

God shall keep the growing secret of the
silence in his heart,
Through the crescent years of Knowledge,
through the golden days of Art :
Silent heart whose birthless beatings throb
so softly in their place,
That God cannot hear himself, in all the
continent of Space.

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